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2
3 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
4 WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
5 AT TACOMA

6 TRAVELERS PROPERTY
7 CASUALTY COMPANY OF
8 AMERICA, et al.,

9 Plaintiffs,

10 v.

11 NORTHWEST PIPE COMPANY, et al.,

12 Defendants.

CASE NO. C17-5098 BHS

ORDER DENYING PLAINTIFFS'
MOTION TO STRIKE AND
DEFENDANTS' JOINT MOTION
TO STAY AND RESERVING
RULING ON DEFENDANT'S
MOTION TO AMEND AND THE
PARTIES' MOTIONS FOR
SUMMARY JUDGMENT

13 This matter comes before the Court on the following motions: Defendant Norwest
14 Pipe Company's ("NPC") motion for partial summary judgment (Dkt. 14); Plaintiffs
15 Travelers Property Casualty Company of America's ("Travelers") and The Phoenix
16 Insurance Company's ("Phoenix") (collectively "Plaintiffs") motion for summary
17 judgment (Dkt. 17); NPC's and Defendant Greater Vancouver Water District's ("Water
18 District") (collectively "Defendants") joint motion to stay (Dkt. 21); and NPC's motion
19 for leave to amend its answer to the complaint (Dkt. 26).

20 **I. FACTUAL BACKGROUND AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY**

21 **A. Underlying Dispute and Litigation Between the Water District and NPC**

22 On August 7, 2015, the Water District commenced an action against NPC in the
Supreme Court of British Columbia. Dkt. 18-12. In that action, the Water District alleges

1 that it suffered damages in the construction of a large water pipeline, referred to as the
2 “Twin Tunnels” project, arising from the alleged failure of circumferential welds that
3 were being used to attach grout plugs to a large steel pipe liner. *Id.* Both the grout plugs
4 and steel liner were manufactured and supplied to the Water District by NPC. *Id.* at 5.
5 Specifically, the Water District brought the following allegations against NPC:

6 *Claim against Northwest Pipe*

- 7 39. Northwest Pipe had an obligation under the Pipe Supply Contract
8 and owed a duty of care to the GVWD to ensure that the Material
9 that it manufactured and supplied to the GVWD conformed to the
10 design specifications, was free from defects and was fit for the
11 purpose for which it was to be used.
12 40. Northwest Pipe breached the Pipe Supply Contract and was
13 negligent by failing to exercise the reasonable skill, care or diligence
14 of a competent metals fabricator, particulars of which include the
15 following:
16 a. failing to ensure that the Material that it manufactured and
17 supplied to the GVWD conformed to the design
18 specifications provided to Northwest Pipe;
19 b. failing to ensure that the Material that it manufactured and
20 supplied to the GVWD was free from defects;
21 c. failing to ensure that the Material that it manufactured and
22 supplied to the GVWD was fit for the purpose for which it
was to be used; and
d. such further and other particulars as may be advised.
41. Northwest Pipe’s breach of contract and negligence caused the Grout
Plug Failures and delayed the construction of the Twin Tunnels.
42. As a result of the breach of contract and negligence of Northwest
Pipe, the GVWD has suffered and continues to suffer loss, damage
and expense.

* * *

Damages

- 19 47. As a result of the negligence, breach of duty and breaches of contract
20 by HMM, Northwest Pipe and SCP, the GVWD has incurred
21 additional and unnecessary cost, including the following:
22 a. additional cost to investigate the cause of the Grout Plug
Failures;
b. additional cost to redesign the method for sealing the grout
ports of the Steel Liner;

- c. the additional cost to install, remove and then replace the failed grout plugs;
- d. delay in construction of the Twin Tunnels as a result of Grout Plug Failures; and
- e. such further and other particulars as may be provided to the defendants prior to the trial of this action.

Id. at 10–11.

On August 5, 2016, NPC tendered a claim to Plaintiffs based on this underlying lawsuit. Dkt. 18-13 at 1. On August 9, 2016, Plaintiffs acknowledged NPC’s claim. *Id.* On October 26, 2016, Plaintiffs assumed the defense of NPC under a reservation of rights, including the right “to withdraw from the defense of NPC in regard to the Underlying Lawsuit.” Dkt. 18-15.

B. Policy Provisions Applicable to Reservation of Rights

Plaintiffs’ reservation of rights letter highlighted potential coverage issues based on the theory that the damage alleged in the underlying litigation may not constitute “property damage” as covered by the policy. Dkt. 18-15 at 8. The policy’s applicable coverage provision and relevant definitions are provided below:

SECTION I – COVERAGES

COVERAGE A BODILY INJURY AND PROPERTY DAMAGE LIABILITY

1. Insuring Agreement

a. We will pay those sums that the insured becomes legally obligated to pay as damages because of “bodily injury” or “property damage” to which this insurance applies. We will have the right and duty to defend the insured against any “suit” seeking those damages. However, we will have no duty to defend the insured against any “suit” seeking damages for “bodily injury” or “property damage” to which this insurance does not apply. We may, at our discretion, investigate any “occurrence” and settle any claim or “suit” that may result. But:

(1) The amount we will pay for damages is limited as described in Section III – Limits Of Insurance; and

1 (c) A person or organization whose business or
assets you have acquired; and

2 (2) Containers (other than vehicles), materials, parts or
equipment furnished in connection with such goods or products.

3 b. Includes:

4 (1) Warranties or representations made at any time with
respect to the fitness, quality, durability, performance or use of “your
product”; and

5 (2) The providing of or failure to provide warnings or
instructions.

6 c. Does not include vending machines or other property rented
to or located for the use of others but not sold.

7 Dkt. 18-1 at 21, 24, 32, 34.

8 **C. This Lawsuit and the Instant Motions**

9 On February 8, 2017, Plaintiffs filed their complaint in the instant action. Dkt. 1.
10 Plaintiffs seek a declaratory judgment that they owe no duty to defend or indemnify in
11 the underlying dispute between NPC and the Water District. *Id.* at 21.

12 On March 30, 2017, NPC moved for partial summary judgment on whether
13 Plaintiffs have a duty to defend NPC in the underlying lawsuit. Dkt. 14. On April 13,
14 2017, Plaintiffs moved for summary judgment. Dkt. 17. On April 20, 2017, NPC moved
15 for a partial stay of this case as it relates to whether Plaintiffs have a duty to indemnify
16 NPC for the damages alleged in the underlying litigation. Dkt. 21.

17 On May 1, 2017, Plaintiffs responded to the motion to stay. Dkt. 23. Also on that
18 day, the Water District joined in NPC’s motion to stay. Dkt. 25. On May 5, 2017, NPC
19 filed a reply in support of its motion to stay. Dkt. 27.

20 On May 4, 2017, NPC filed a motion for leave to amend its answer to the
21 complaint and to assert new counterclaims. Dkt. 26.

1 On May 12, 2017, NPC and the Water District responded to Plaintiffs' motion for
2 summary judgment. Dkts. 28, 29. Also on May 12, 2017, Plaintiffs responded to NPC's
3 motion for partial summary judgment. Dkt. 31.

4 On May 15, 2017, Plaintiffs filed a response to NPC's motion for leave to amend
5 its answer. Dkt. 33. Although Plaintiffs stated that their position was one of "non-
6 opposition" to the motion for leave to amend, their response nonetheless asserted that the
7 proposed amendments would be futile. *Id.*

8 On May 26, 2017, NPC and Plaintiffs filed replies on their respective motions for
9 summary judgment. Dkts. 36, 37.

10 II. DISCUSSION

11 A. Motion to Stay

12 The Court begins its analysis by addressing NPC's and the Water District's joint
13 motion for a partial stay. Defendants argue that the Court should partially stay these
14 proceedings to the extent that they relate to whether Plaintiffs owe a duty to indemnify
15 NPC in the underlying litigation. Their motion is based on a theory that is a reoccurring
16 theme throughout their briefings: namely, the distinction between the duty to defend and
17 the duty to indemnify. *See* Dkt 14; Dkt. 21; Dkt. 29 at 2–6.

18 It is well-established Washington law "that the duty to defend is different from
19 and broader than the duty to indemnify." *Am. Best Food, Inc. v. Alea London, Ltd.*, 168
20 Wn.2d 398, 405 (2010), *as corrected on denial of reconsideration* (June 28, 2010) (citing
21 *Safeco Ins. Co. of Am. v. Butler*, 118 Wn.2d 383, 392 (1992)). While "[t]he duty to
22 indemnify exists only if the policy *actually covers* the insured's liability[,], [t]he duty to

1 defend is triggered if the insurance policy *conceivably covers* allegations in the
2 complaint.” *Id.* (citing *Woo v. Fireman’s Fund Ins. Co.*, 161 Wn.2d 43, 53 (2007))
3 (emphasis in original). However, while the duty to defend is distinctly broader than the
4 duty to indemnify, both are derivative of the same underlying concept: coverage under
5 the applicable policy. “When the facts or the law affecting coverage is disputed, the
6 insurer may defend under a reservation of rights until *coverage* is settled in a declaratory
7 action.” *Am. Best Food*, 168 Wn.2d at 405 (emphasis added). Because this is just such a
8 declaratory action, the issue before the Court is whether coverage exists under the
9 applicable policy for the various claims in the underlying litigation. This issue is
10 dispositive of both the duty to defend and the duty to indemnify.

11 Indeed, the fact that the duty to defend is implicated by the timing of this lawsuit
12 is important to the Court’s analysis, as it refines the lens through which the Court may
13 view the issue of coverage. For instance, because the underlying litigation is unresolved,
14 the duty to defend is ongoing and the Court’s review must generally be limited to
15 “look[ing] at the ‘eight corners’ of the insurance contract and the underlying complaint.”
16 *Nat’l Union Fire Ins. Co. of Pittsburgh, PA v. Coinstar, Inc.*, 39 F. Supp. 3d 1149, 1156
17 (W.D. Wash. 2014). Nonetheless, the distinction between the duties to defend or
18 indemnify is not so profound, by itself, to justify staying the Court’s analysis of one duty
19 while addressing the other. Contrary to the Defendants’ assertions, analysis of whether
20 the allegations in the underlying lawsuit implicate covered property damage will not
21 prejudice them in any way. Accordingly, the motion to stay is denied.
22

1 **B. Motion to Strike**

2 Plaintiffs move to strike certain portions of NPC's response to Plaintiffs' motion
3 for summary judgment, claiming that they are unsupported by affidavit or citation to any
4 evidence in the record. Dkt. 37 at 1–3.

5 First, Plaintiffs seek to strike NPC's description of the circumferential welds as
6 material supplied by Seymour-Cap Partnership ("SCP") that is separate from the grout
7 plugs and steel liner manufactured and supplied by NPC. *See* Dkt. 29 at 8:13–19, 9:9–10,
8 9:22–10:2. However, NPC's statements are clearly supported by the underlying
9 complaint, which describes how SPC was responsible for supplying the "labour,
10 equipment and materials" to perform the installation of the grout plugs, including
11 welding the grout plugs to seal the steel liner. Dkt. 18-12 at 8.

12 Second, Plaintiffs move to strike NPC's argument that the steel liner became real
13 property once it was cemented into the Twin Tunnels project. *See* Dkt. 29 at 11:10–17,
14 12:16–13:6, 14:13–19. This argument was properly supported by the affidavit of Brent
15 Keil, Dkt. 30, which was properly cited by NPC in its argument, Dkt. 29 at 12. Although
16 NPC could have done a better job citing the affidavit after each instance that it relied on
17 the statements therein, it is clear that NPC's argument is supported by affidavit and
18 citation. Regardless, the assertions about the steel liner as real property do not affect the
19 outcome of the Court's analysis, as the Court concludes below that any conceivably
20 alleged damages to the steel liner are excluded under the "impaired property" exclusion.

21 Therefore, the Court denies Plaintiffs' motion to strike.
22

1 **C. Motions for Summary Judgment**

2 **1. Summary Judgment Standard**

3 Summary judgment is proper only if the pleadings, the discovery and disclosure
4 materials on file, and any affidavits show that there is no genuine dispute as to any
5 material fact and that the movant is entitled to judgment as a matter of law. Fed. R. Civ.
6 P. 56(c). The moving party is entitled to judgment as a matter of law when the
7 nonmoving party fails to make a sufficient showing on an essential element of a claim in
8 the case on which the nonmoving party has the burden of proof. *Celotex Corp. v. Catrett*,
9 477 U.S. 317, 323 (1986). There is no genuine issue of fact for trial where the record,
10 taken as a whole, could not lead a rational trier of fact to find for the nonmoving party.
11 *Matsushita Elec. Indus. Co. v. Zenith Radio Corp.*, 475 U.S. 574, 586 (1986) (nonmoving
12 party must present specific, significant probative evidence, not simply “some
13 metaphysical doubt”). *See also* Fed. R. Civ. P. 56(e). Conversely, a genuine dispute over
14 a material fact exists if there is sufficient evidence supporting the claimed factual dispute,
15 requiring a judge or jury to resolve the differing versions of the truth. *Anderson v. Liberty*
16 *Lobby, Inc.*, 477 U.S. 242, 253 (1986); *T.W. Elec. Serv., Inc. v. Pac. Elec. Contractors*
17 *Ass’n*, 809 F.2d 626, 630 (9th Cir. 1987).

18 In this case, the parties dispute whether coverage exists under the applicable
19 insurance policy for the damages alleged in the underlying lawsuit between NPC and the
20 Water District. “Summary judgment in an insurance coverage case should be granted
21 where (1) there is no dispute about the facts and (2) coverage depends solely on the
22 language of the insurance policy.” *Stouffer & Knight v. Cont’l Cas. Co.*, 96 Wn. App.

1 741, 747 (1999). The interpretation of insurance policies is generally a question of law to
2 be decided by the court. *Quadrant Corp. v. Am. States Ins. Co.*, 154 Wn.2d 165, 171
3 (2005). However, where a material provision of a contract is ambiguous, “[d]etermining a
4 contractual term’s meaning involves a question of fact and examination of objective
5 manifestations of the parties’ intent.” *Martinez v. Miller Indus., Inc.*, 94 Wn. App. 935,
6 943 (1999).

7 Because the parties’ dispute is before the Court at a time when the underlying
8 lawsuit remains unresolved, the Court’s review is generally limited to the “eight corners”
9 of the applicable insurance policy and the complaint from the underlying lawsuit. *See*
10 *Nat’l Union Fire Ins. Co.*, 39 F. Supp. 3d at 1156. Reviewing those two documents,
11 “[o]nly if the alleged claim is clearly not covered by the policy is the insurer relieved of
12 its duty to defend.” *Truck Ins. Exch. v. Vanport Homes, Inc.*, 147 Wn.2d 751, 760 (2002)
13 (citing *Kirk v. Mt. Airy Ins. Co.*, 134 Wn.2d 558, 561 (1998)). Nonetheless:

14 if the allegations in the complaint conflict with facts known to the insurer
15 or if the allegations are ambiguous, facts outside the complaint may be
16 considered. However, these extrinsic facts may only be used to trigger the
duty to defend; the insurer may not rely on such facts to deny its defense
duty.

17 *Expedia, Inc. v. Steadfast Ins. Co.*, 180 Wn.2d 793, 803–04 (2014), *as corrected* (Aug. 6,
18 2014) (internal citations omitted). Also, to the extent that any exclusions contained in the
19 insurance contract are implicated by allegations from the underlying lawsuit, those
20 “[e]xclusionary clauses contained in insurance policies are strictly construed against the
21 insurer.” *Id.* at 747–48 (quoting *Allstate Ins. Co. v. Raynor*, 93 Wn. App. 484, 492
22 (1999)).

1 **2. Coverage**

2 Plaintiffs argue that they are entitled to summary judgment on the basis that the
3 Water District’s complaint in the underlying lawsuit does not allege any “property
4 damage” as defined by the insurance policy. Alternatively, Plaintiffs argue that even if
5 property damage was alleged in the underlying litigation, coverage is precluded by
6 several policy exclusions. NPC argues the inverse: namely, that it is entitled to partial
7 summary judgment on the issue of the duty to defend because the underlying lawsuit
8 alleges “property damage” covered by the policy and none of the exclusions cited by the
9 Plaintiffs otherwise bar coverage under the policy.

10 **a. “Property Damage” in Underlying Complaint**

11 In determining whether the underlying lawsuit gives rise to a duty under the
12 policy, the threshold inquiry is whether the underlying lawsuit alleges any damages that
13 could result in liability.

14 As outlined in the facts above, the applicable coverage under NPC’s general
15 commercial liability policy with Plaintiffs extends to “property damage.” *See* Dkt. 18-1 at
16 20–21. The policy defines “property damage” as:

17 **a.** Physical injury to tangible property, including all resulting
18 loss of use of that property. All such loss of use shall be deemed to occur at
19 the time of the physical injury that caused it; or

20 **b.** Loss of use of tangible property that is not physically injured.
21 All such loss of use shall be deemed to occur at the time of the
22 “occurrence” that caused it.

Dkt. 18-1 at 34.

1 The primary thrust of the Water District’s lawsuit is to recover for the expenses
2 incurred due to delay in the Twin Tunnels project. Dkt. 18-12 at 11. The parties do not
3 dispute that such damages are not covered under the policy as “property damage.” *See*
4 Dkt. 17 at 12–14; Dkt. 29 at 7.

5 However, in addition to damages arising from delay and breach of contract, the
6 underlying complaint also claims damages of the “additional cost to install, remove, and
7 then replace the failed grout plugs.” Dkt. 18-12 at 11. In the context of the facts alleged in
8 the underlying complaint, this sentence can be construed as claiming damages associated
9 with repairs resulting from physical damage to the steel liner, the grout plugs themselves,
10 and the circumferential welds used to seal the grout plugs to the steel liner. *See id.* at 8,
11 11. Such alleged damages satisfy the “property damage” definition of “physical injury to
12 tangible property.” Accordingly, the Court concludes that the underlying lawsuit has
13 alleged “property damage” as defined in the applicable policy.

14 **b. Exclusions**

15 Although the underlying lawsuit against NPC alleges at least some “property
16 damage,” this does not end the Court’s analysis. The Court must further determine
17 whether coverage of the alleged “property damage” is barred by any of the policy’s
18 exclusions. Plaintiffs argue that coverage for the “property damage” alleged in the
19 underlying lawsuit is barred by three of the policy’s exclusions: (1) the “your product”
20 exclusion, (2) the “impaired property” exclusion, and (3) the “recall” exclusion.

1 **i. “Your Product” Exclusion**

2 The “your product” exclusion provides that any “property damage” to “your
3 product” arising out of the product is not covered by the policy. Dkt. 18-1 at 24. “Your
4 product” is defined as “[a]ny goods or products, other than real property, manufactured,
5 sold, handled, distributed or disposed of by” the insured, including any “[w]arranties or
6 representations made at any time with respect to the fitness, quality, durability,
7 performance or use of ‘your product.’” Dkt. 18-1 at 34.

8 Of the property that allegedly suffered damage, both the steel liner and grout plugs
9 were manufactured and supplied to the Water District by NPC. *See* Dkt. 18-12 at 7.
10 Plaintiffs argue that this fact renders those alleged damages subject to the “your product”
11 exclusion. Dkt. 17 at 17–20. The parties do not dispute that the grout plugs constitute
12 “your product” under the policy. Therefore, any damage to the grout plugs is not covered.
13 However, NPC argues that (1) the steel liner ceased to be “your product” once it was
14 integrated into the larger project, and (2) the steel liner constituted real property which is
15 not subject to the “your product” exclusion. Dkt. 14 at 11–12; Dkt. 29 at 10–13.

16 The Court summarily rejects NPC’s first argument. There is nothing in the policy
17 to suggest that property qualifying as “your product” ceases to qualify as such merely
18 because possession is transferred to another party and the product is incorporated into
19 another project. In fact, to the contrary, the “impaired property” exclusion and definition
20 clearly indicates that the “your product” designation continues even after the product
21 becomes incorporated into a larger work. *See* Dkt. 18-1 at 32.

22 NPC’s second argument is more convincing:

1 What would otherwise be an insured manufacturer’s product, or an insured
2 material supplier’s product, may lose that designation once it is
3 incorporated into a building project if it thereby becomes real property
4 under that jurisdiction’s law of fixtures. In such cases, *if property damage
to it occurs after being built into the project, it no longer fits within the
definition of “your product,” so the exclusion should not apply.*

5 Scott C. Turner, *Insurance Coverage of Construction Disputes* § 27:10 (2d ed.)

6 (emphasis added). The Ninth Circuit has relied upon this rule, albeit in an unpublished
7 decision. *Mid-Continent Cas. Co. v. Titan Const. Corp.*, 281 F. App’x 766, 768–69 (9th
8 Cir. 2008) (quoting *Black’s Law Dictionary*, 1254 (8th ed. 2004)) (“Since ‘real property’
9 is not defined in the CGL, we adopt the common meaning of the term, ‘land and anything
10 growing on, attached to, or erected on it, excluding anything that may be severed without
11 injury to the land.’”). Other courts have likewise reached the same conclusion. *See*
12 *Scottsdale Ins. Co. v. Tri-State Ins. Co. of MN.*, 302 F. Supp. 2d 1100, 1104–08 (D.N.D.
2004).

13 Under long-established Washington law,¹ “[t]he criteria for a fixture are: (1)
14 [a]ctual annexation to the realty, or something appurtenant thereto; (2) application to the
15 use or purpose to which that part of the realty with which it is connected is appropriated;
16 and (3) the intention of the party making the annexation to make a permanent accession
17

18
19 ¹ The Court notes that the Twin Tunnels project is located in Vancouver, British Columbia. *See* Dkt. 18-12
20 at 5. Therefore, it is questionable whether the Court should look to Washington State law in determining whether the
21 steel liner constitutes real property for the purpose of analyzing the “your product” exclusion. Nonetheless, NPC has
22 argued the issue in the context of Washington state law and Plaintiffs have failed to offer any substantive rebuttal.
See Dkt. 29 at 12–13; Dkt. 37 at 9–10. Indeed, both parties appear to cite generally to Washington state law
throughout their numerous briefs on the instant motions and, while not briefed by the parties, the applicable policy
may include choice of law provisions that designate Washington state law as controlling. Therefore, the Court
construes the parties’ repeated reference to Washington authorities and their silence on the choice of law as a
concession that the Court’s analysis is governed by Washington state law.

1 to the freehold.” *Liberty Lake Sewer Dist. No. 1 v. Liberty Lake Utilities Co.*, 37 Wn.
2 App. 809, 813 (1984). Upon installation of the grout plugs, the steel liner was cemented
3 into the underground Twin Tunnels project. Dkt. 30 at 2. This establishes that the steel
4 liner was sufficiently annexed to the realty to satisfy the first prong of the fixture criteria.
5 Additionally, there is no dispute that the steel liner was applied to the purpose of the
6 Twin Tunnels project for which the portion of realty is appropriated. *See* Dkt. 30; Dkt.
7 18-12 at 5. Finally, the underlying complaint by the Water District states that the steel
8 liner was “installed at the ends of each of the tunnels *as a permanent lining . . .* that
9 prevents water from travelling into or out of the tunnels,” thereby establishing the third
10 prong of the fixture criteria. Dkt. 18-12 at 5 (emphasis added). Pursuant to this analysis,
11 the steel liner is real property, or at least it was real property at the time that the alleged
12 defects resulted in the failure of the circumferential welds.

13 In their reply, Plaintiffs also argue that NPC’s representation of the steel liner as
14 real property is “based entirely on an unsupported paragraph regarding the timing and
15 status of the overall project at the time that the defects in the grout plugs were identified.”
16 Dkt. 37 at 9 (citing Dkt. 29 at 11). However, this argument completely ignores NPC’s
17 two-page substantive argument regarding the nature of the steel liner as real property
18 under Washington law, which was properly supported by affidavit. *See* Dkt. 29 at 11–13
19 (citing Dkt. 30). NPC has presented credible evidence to show that the steel liner
20 constituted real property at the time the grout plugs were installed, *see* Dkt. 30, and
21 Plaintiffs have failed to offer any substantive rebuttal to NPC’s argument or evidence, *see*
22 Dkt. 37.

1 The Court notes that Washington courts have previously held that buildings
2 constitute a “product” for the purposes of a “product” exclusion, relying upon policy
3 preferences against interpreting a commercial general liability policy as one would a
4 performance bond. *See, e.g., Mut. of Enumclaw Ins. Co. v. Patrick Archer Const., Inc.*,
5 123 Wash. App. 728, 733 (2004). Under such a principle, the steel liner would likewise
6 qualify as a product subject to an exclusionary clause. This would align with the common
7 meaning of the term “product” as “goods which are processed or assembled in the
8 ordinary channels of commerce,” under which the steel liner and grout plugs would
9 clearly qualify as a product of NPC. *Westman Indus. Co. v. Hartford Ins. Grp.*, 51 Wash.
10 App. 72, 78 (1988). However, unlike the policy here, the policies in those Washington
11 cases did not include a contractual definition of the term “your product.” *See id.* at 733
12 (“‘Products’ itself is not defined in the policy.”). In this case, the policy expressly
13 exempts real property from the “your product” definition. Dkt. 18-1 at 34. (“your
14 product” constitutes “[a]ny goods or products, *other than real property . . .*”) (emphasis
15 added). The Court is required to strictly construe such language in favor of the insured.
16 *Expedia, Inc.*, 180 Wn.2d at 747–48. Accordingly, because the steel liner was real
17 property at the time the alleged underlying defect caused the grout plug failures, the
18 Court concludes that it is not “your product” as defined by the policy.

19 Additionally, the complaint alleges that defects caused the failure of the
20 circumferential welds intended to create a waterproof seal between the grout plugs and
21 the steel liner. Dkt. 18-12 at 8. (“During the original installation of the grout plugs, SCP
22 experienced multiple failures of the circumferential welds used to seal the grout plugs to

1 the Steel Liner.”). The parties do not dispute that the circumferential welds are not the
2 product of NPC. Therefore, the “your product” exclusion does not apply to any damage
3 to the welds.

4 The Court concludes that, to the extent the underlying lawsuit alleges damages to
5 the steel liner arising from a defect therein, the “your product” exclusion does not bar
6 coverage. It is somewhat unclear from the underlying complaint whether the Water
7 District actually seeks to recover for physical damages to the steel liner or the welds. The
8 underlying complaint does not expressly set forth that any of them were damaged or
9 destroyed. Nonetheless, the damages section of the underlying complaint does generally
10 claim “the additional cost to install, remove and then replace the failed grout plugs” and
11 “such further and other particulars as may be provided to the defendants prior to the trial
12 of this action.” Dkt. 18-12 at 11. These claimed damages could reasonably include
13 damages arising from actual damage to the steel liner or welds. The fact that the
14 underlying complaint *conceivably* alleges damage to property not subject to the “your
15 product” exclusion is sufficient for the purpose of the Court’s analysis into whether the
16 “your product” exclusion precludes coverage in the context of the duty to defend.

17 **ii. “Impaired Property” Exclusion**

18 Plaintiffs also argue that coverage is barred under the policy’s “impaired property”
19 and “recall” exclusions. Dkt. 17 at 20–24. The “impaired property” exclusion bars
20 coverage for damage to property that incorporates “your product” “if such property can
21 be restored to use by . . . [t]he repair, replacement, adjustment or removal of ‘your
22 product.’” Dkt. 18-1 at 24, 32. Similarly, it bars coverage for damages that result from a

1 failure to fulfill the terms of service on a contract if the damaged property can be restored
2 to use by fulfilling the terms of the contract. *Id.*

3 The underlying complaint indicates that the grout plugs, circumferential welds,
4 and steel liner were all incorporated together in order to seal the grout ports that held the
5 steel liner in place. *See* Dkt. 18-12. The fact that the “steel liner” constituted real property
6 at the time of the occurrence is irrelevant to the Court’s analysis of the “impaired
7 property” exclusion because, unlike the “your product” definition, the “impaired
8 property” definition does not exclude real property. Accordingly, both the circumferential
9 welds and the steel liner constitute “impaired property” excluded from coverage if they
10 can be “restored to use” by the removal and replacement of the grout plugs.

11 The underlying complaint does not seek any damages resulting to the steel liner
12 other than the “cost to install, remove, and then replace the failed grout plugs.” Dkt. 18-
13 12 at 11. This indicates that replacement of the failed grout plugs would restore the steel
14 liner to use. NPC has failed to present any extrinsic evidence to the contrary. Therefore,
15 the Court concludes that any alleged damage to the steel liner as a result of the grout plug
16 failure constitutes damage to “impaired property” subject to exclusion.

17 While the facts in the underlying complaint show that the steel liner is
18 permanently installed as “impaired property” that will be restored to use by the
19 replacement of the failed grout plugs, the same cannot be said of the “failed”
20 circumferential welds that were intended to seal the grout plugs and the steel liner. As
21 illustrated in *Dewitt Const. Inc. v. Charter Oak Fire Ins. Co.*, 307 F.3d 1127, 1134 (9th
22 Cir. 2002), *as amended on denial of reh’g and reh’g en banc* (Dec. 4, 2002), the

1 “impaired property” exclusion does not bar coverage if tangible property was destroyed
2 in the removal process and not subsequently restored. It cannot be concluded from the
3 underlying complaint that the replacement of the grout plugs will allow the failed welds
4 to be restored to use. Accordingly, because it is conceivable under the allegations of the
5 complaint that the replacement of the grout plugs will not restore the failed
6 circumferential welds to use, the “impaired property” exclusion cannot be used to refute
7 Plaintiffs’ duty to defend as it pertains to alleged damages to the circumferential welds.

8 **iii. “Recall” Exclusion**

9 Plaintiffs also argue that coverage for the damages alleged in the underlying
10 complaint are prohibited by the “recall” exclusion. Dkt. 17 at 23–24. The “recall”
11 exclusion (commonly referred to as a “sistership” exclusion) bars coverage for damages
12 resulting from the recall or withdrawal of “your product” or “impaired property” because
13 of a known or suspected defect. Dkt. 18-1 at 24. The Court need not consider this
14 argument as it may apply to damages to the steel liner or grout plugs, as those damages
15 are already precluded under the “your product” and “impaired property” exclusions. To
16 the extent that Plaintiffs rely on this exclusion to challenge coverage for any alleged
17 damage to the circumferential welds, the Court rejects this argument. Any damage to the
18 welds occurred at the time the alleged defects resulted in their failure. Such damage is not
19 resultant to “the loss of use, withdrawal, recall, inspection, repair, replacement,
20 adjustment, removal or disposal” of any product.

1 **c. Conclusion**

2 Pursuant to the above analysis, the Court concludes that the only aspect of the
3 underlying litigation conceivably covered by the policy is any alleged “property damage”
4 to the circumferential welds. That “property damage” could come in the form of either
5 physical injury or loss of use, as either is conceivable under the allegations set forth in the
6 underlying complaint. However, to the extent that the underlying lawsuit seeks to recover
7 any other damages, those damages either fail to qualify as “property damage” or are
8 subject to exclusion.

9 Before the Court issues an order based on this finding, it requests that the parties
10 submit supplemental briefing. The parties have not yet addressed how the Court should
11 proceed in regards to the duty to defend when presented with a “mixed” lawsuit such as
12 this, comprised of both covered and uncovered claims. In some jurisdictions, such as
13 California, “[i]f any claim alleged in a lawsuit could be potentially covered under the
14 policy, the insurer is obligated to defend against all claims alleged, even if some of those
15 claims could not even potentially be covered, and even if such non-covered claims
16 predominate.” *Los Osos Cmty. Servs. Dist. v. Am. Alternative Ins. Corp.*, 585 F. Supp. 2d
17 1195, 1202 (C.D. Cal. 2008). However, at least one Washington decision strongly
18 suggests that “mixed” lawsuits do not require the insurer to defend the entire lawsuit if an
19 “effective means exists for prorating the costs of defense between the claims for which
20 the defendant insurer provided no coverage from those which it did cover.” *Nat’l Steel*
21 *Const. Co. v. Nat’l Union Fire Ins. Co. of Pittsburgh*, 14 Wn. App. 573, 576 (1975). In
22 their supplemental briefing, the parties will address how the Court should tailor its final

1 order, particularly in relation to the duty to defend, in light of its conclusion that the only
2 claim conceivably covered by the policy is that for property damage to the
3 circumferential welds.

4 **D. Motion for Leave to Amend Answer**

5 NPC has also moved for leave to amend its answer. Dkt. 26. Leave to amend an
6 initial pleading may be allowed by leave of the court and “shall freely be given when
7 justice so requires.” *Foman v. Davis*, 371 U.S. 178, 182 (1962); Fed. R. Civ. P. 15(a).
8 Granting leave to amend rests in the discretion of the trial court. *Internat’l Ass’n of*
9 *Machinists & Aerospace Workers v. Republic Airlines*, 761 F.2d 1386, 1390 (9th Cir.
10 1985). In determining whether amendment is appropriate, the Court considers five
11 potential factors: (1) bad faith, (2) undue delay, (3) prejudice to the opposing party, (4)
12 futility of amendment, and (3) whether there has been previous amendment. *United States*
13 *v. Corinthian Colleges*, 655 F.3d 984, 995 (9th Cir. 2011). The Court’s decision is guided
14 by the established practice of permitting amendments with “extreme liberality” in order
15 to further the policy of reaching merits-based decisions. *DCD Programs Ltd. v. Leighton*,
16 833 F.2d 183, 186 (9th Cir. 1987). In light of this policy, the nonmoving party generally
17 bears the burden of showing why leave to amend should be denied. *Genentech, Inc. v.*
18 *Abbott Labs.*, 127 F.R.D. 529, 530-31 (N.D. Cal. 1989).

19 Plaintiffs have filed a brief in response to the motion for leave to amend. Dkt. 33.
20 Although the Plaintiffs suggest that the proposed amendment is futile, they have adopted
21 a position of “non-opposition.” *Id.* Amendment is futile “only if no set of facts can be
22 proved under the amendment to the pleadings that would constitute a valid and sufficient

1 claim or defense.” *Miller v. Rykoff Sexton, Inc.*, 845 F.2d 209, 214 (9th Cir. 1988). The
2 Court concludes that the burden of proof for showing futility, which falls on the
3 nonmoving party, has not been satisfied because Plaintiffs have elected to forego
4 substantive argument in opposition to the proposed amendment.

5 Nonetheless, the Court notes that its decision in this order may substantially
6 change both parties’ positions on whether amendment is warranted. Therefore, before the
7 Court issues a ruling on the motion for leave to amend, the Court asks that the parties
8 submit additional briefing on whether leave to amend should be granted in light of this
9 order.

10 **III. ORDER**

11 Therefore, it is hereby **ORDERED** as follows:

- 12 1. The motion to stay proceedings (Dkt. 21) is **DENIED**;
- 13 2. The Court **RESERVES RULING** on NPC’s motion to file an amended
14 answer (Dkt. 26);
- 15 3. The Court **RESERVES RULING** on the parties’ motions for summary
16 judgment (Dkts. 14, 17).
- 17 4. The parties may submit simultaneous supplemental briefs, not to exceed
18 twelve (12) pages total, on the issues of the duty to defend and whether leave to amend
19 NPC’s answer should be granted. The briefs shall be submitted no later than July 7, 2016.
20 The parties may also submit supplemental replies, not to exceed six (6) pages, no later
21 than July 14, 2017.
22

1 5. The Clerk shall renote the motions for summary judgment (Dkts. 14, 17)
2 and the motion for leave to amend (Dkt. 26) for consideration on July 14, 2017.

3 Dated this 22nd day of June, 2017.

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6 BENJAMIN H. SETTLE
7 United States District Judge
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